

**Alameda Creek Watershed Center in Sunol & Grounds Restoration
Planning Meeting**

**Sunol Yard Conference Room
June 11, 2013**

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Robb Marshall

Mary Marshall

Irv Tiessen

Diane Tiessen

Aspen Kvicala, SAGE

Solveig Shearer

Erica Herron, EBRPD

Jim Townsend, EBRPD

Dan Reasor

Derek Johnson

Tim Koopmann

Paul De Freitas, SF Department of Public Works

Konstantine Zlatev, SF Department of Public
Works

Tony Esterbrooks, SF Department of Public
Works

Rommel Taylor, SF Department of Public Works

Julie Laue, SF Department of Public Works

Martha Ketterer, SF Department of Public Works

Carla Schultheis, Natural Resources and Land

Management

Tim Ramirez, Natural Resources and Land

Management

Neal Fujita, Natural Resources and Land

Management

Emily Powell, Communications and Public

Outreach

Betsy L. Rhodes, Communications and Public

Outreach

I. Welcome and Introduction

The purpose of the meeting is to present revised conceptual designs for the proposed Alameda Creek Watershed Center at Sunol. Design revisions were requested by the SF Civic Design Review Board members. These designs are very preliminary, and are still being refined internally. The goal is to submit these to the Civic Design Review Board in July. Because of all of the design work, the construction schedule has been pushed back one year, at a minimum. Current schedule plans for construction in 2015 or 2016. We are still working with Jenny Rigby on the interpretive elements and folding them into the revised building layouts.

II. Overview of Revised Preliminary Design

Paul De Freitas and Martha Ketterer from Bureau of Architecture presented a revised area layout, and three different general design layouts for the Watershed Center and the surrounding area. It is likely that the design that we settle on will be a combination of all three, so attendees were asked to comment on what they liked, or did not like, about each of the three different design proposals, A, B, and C. In general, the site is laid out away from the temple. The visitor experience will mimic the flow of water from the upper watershed, down the Valley towards the temple.

III. Discussion and Feedback

a. Would children be allowed to play in the 'water feature'?

i. Answer: absolutely. That is the intent. Alameda Creek is often not accessible.

b. Parking Lot

i. What is the capacity?

1. Answer: It is based on building occupancy... still working on that.

- ii. Quick lunch – people not wanting the ‘experience’ of the entire site, but wanting to picnic at the temple shouldn’t have to walk all the way from the far parking lot. The short-term parking should be larger to accommodate more parking spaces.
- iii. What are the logistics of bus parking and turn around?
 - 1. Yes, we plan to include a place for buses to turn around in the parking lot.
- iv. Would like picnic table in the vicinity of the Temple for the quick lunches or casual visitors. Also would like to see benches in the area for the public to use.
- c. Grounds
 - i. Would like to see picnic tables around the site.
 - ii. Would like to make sure trees and plants in the ‘biomes’ are clearly marked to help educate the public.
 - iii. Would like to see a timeline of the man-made effects on the area reflected in the grounds, and how man’s activities have had tremendous impact on the watershed, from the Native Americans, the Spanish, the Ranchers, our activities today, and how we are working to restore the watershed.
 - iv. Would like to see a timeline on the ground, like the one at the Meadowlark Dairy.
 - v. The stream chamber at Taylor Creek in Lake Tahoe is an excellent model for showing above and below ground stream beds.
 - vi. On the other side of the berm is a quarry. None of this would be happening without the quarry and the fight against it. I would like to see an exhibit on the gravel extraction in the area. Whether it is included in the indoor or outdoor space, it needs to be part of the discussion.
 - vii. I want to see a view of the quarry.
 - 1. Answer: The team plans to incorporate the quarry materials into the landscape plan and even the building materials as a nod to the local quarrying.
- d. What is the established occupancy for the multi-purpose room?
 - i. Believe 100-person capacity. Hasn’t changed from the original discussion.
- e. Is there going to be a green roof? Solar panels?
 - i. We are not there, yet, as far as design. Will incorporate sustainable features in the design, but we are still at a preliminary level, so we aren’t sure what that will include.
- f. Construction – will the Yard come first?
 - i. Not sure of the construction sequence or the contract methods. There will be one CEQA document for both sites moving forward.
- g. Building lines and shape – Option A and B
 - i. The building layout is very straight, and water is curvilinear. You might want to explore mimicking water movement in the building design more for less of a contrast to a watershed natural area.
 - ii. The roof of Option B, in particular, is a very sharp contrast to the natural undulations of the surrounding area.
 - iii. I like the U shaped outdoor area.
 - iv. Be sure to have enough space for kids to run around and be kids. The additional covered space outside would be very useful to you.
- h. General Comments – Option C
 - i. The display being broken up into the four areas on the wall facing the creek is very interesting and makes it more versatile.
 - ii. The fact that the glass would limit the view to only in the direction of the Temple is troubling, though. Would like to be able to see more of a view.
 - iii. We are interested in Jenny Rigby’s view on this and which would work better for the interpretive designs.
 - iv. Getting people outside of the building to cross from one section to another is important.
- i. Some liked option C – in that different uses seemed separate from each other.

- j. Many liked the idea of an elevated viewing platform or station.
- k. Would want to avoid a 'Disneyland' feel that isn't very realistic, would like to see some acknowledgement of man's activities in the area and how they've altered the landscape. To that end, an elevated platform would be useful.
- l. Some liked a low profile, and at the same time liked the higher roof for viewing or solar.
- m. How would people cross from the Ag Park?
 - i. Currently, 3 field trips a week maximum to the Ag Park with either 1 school bus or 15 cars accompanying the children.
 - ii. If there is a program at SAGE and at the Center – where would people park? Will there be enough space?
 - iii. The team will need updated numbers from SAGE about how many and how frequently the groups come into the AgPark.
- n. Try to incorporate the view from Tank Hill into the exhibits somehow. It has the most striking view of the Valley.
- o. What about trail connections?
 - i. Jim Townsend stated that the East Bay Regional Park District is currently looking into four potential trail connections into the area: 1. Ridgeline from the Vargas Plateau, 2. Niles Canyon along the canyon floor, 3. Tyler Ranch staging area, 4. To Sunol along the Alameda Creek.
- p. General Comments:
 - i. The design is wonderful. Love the water as the park as a metaphor for the journey of water.
 - ii. Put a great deal of thought and sensitivity into the design and the people present expressed their appreciation for those efforts.

IV. Next Steps

- a. SFPUC will place these materials on our website. Paul will bring the model and the drawings to the June 26th Sunol Regional Open House. Please spread the word to those who would like to see it but haven't.
- b. SFPUC will move forward the presentation to Civic Design Review in July. We will let the group know about the outcome of the meeting.
- c. We will combine the Yard and the Center designs for the next phase of work and hope to go back to Civic Design in September. That means a potential meeting with the group to go over those drawings for Phase II in August/September timeframe.
- d. We will have a much better idea of the project schedule after September.
- e. We will also come back with Jenny's plans for the interpretive in the next meeting or two as well.

V. Follow up Items

- a. Attend the Sunol Regional Open House on June 26th, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.
- b. Folks can still make comments.
- c. SFPUC will be in touch about July Civic Design Review and the progress of Phase II at the end of the summer.

Visit sfwater.org/sunolvalley and click on the Watershed Center link to view and download these concepts